

REVIEWS

DATA CDs

More and more research material is being released on data CDs; here's our guide to the best of the latest offerings – reviewed by James Taylor

SUPPLIERS INCLUDE:
TWR Computing
 [t] 01284 828 271
 [w] www.twrcomputing.co.uk
S&N Genealogy Supplies
 [t] 01722 716 121
 [w] www.genealogysupplies.com
Back to Roots
 [t] 01453 821 300
 [w] www.backtoroots.co.uk

Buckinghamshire 1851 Census Transcription with Index

PC PUBLISHER: Buckinghamshire Family History Society [w] www.bucksfhs.org.uk
 PRICE: £10.50

This comes on a single CD in a simple plastic sheath and at a modest price, but you get quite a lot for your money. There's no auto play, so you have to run the Setup program manually. What's installed is a sophisticated search engine, offering various ways of accessing and analysing the information in the database. The data, as well as parishes in Bucks in 1851, includes parishes or parts of parishes that have been moved in or out of Bucks since 1851.

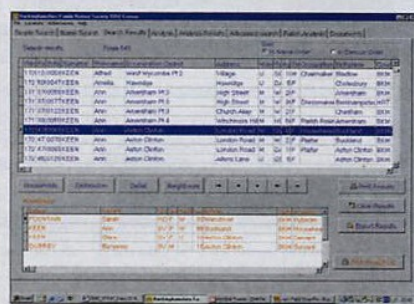
You can search for names with or without variants and a range of criteria, and print out the details for individuals or households. You can also gather and analyse information about specific parishes and you can print or export details from the enumerator's notebook, all the districts, a list of the villages and hamlets mentioned in the enumerator's

notes, and abbreviations used. The search engine interface has its own tabbed menu.

The Simple Search screen enables you to search for a single name with no variants; you can restrict it to a specific parish and/or an age range. The Name Search screen allows up to ten different surnames or ten name variants in one search. You can also enter up to five different forenames or variants. You can choose which extra parishes to search and specify individuals or households.

Search Results appear in two tables, one for all individuals found and one for their households, and can be sorted either by Name (surname + forename) or in Census order (Alphabetical District + Folio + Schedule Number + Order of household). You can also generate an outline map showing the approximate location of the finds throughout the

SEARCH RESULTS:
 See all the usual census detail for individuals and households



county. Many results can be further analysed by a variety of criteria with colourful graphical output.

Finally, the CD contains transcripts of contemporary journals, including *The Times* and *Punch*, commenting on the 1851 Census both specific to Bucks, and nationally. This CD is not only useful to genealogists but to local historians too.

BUY IT FOR...
 Easily accessed content and versatile searching, analysing and reporting

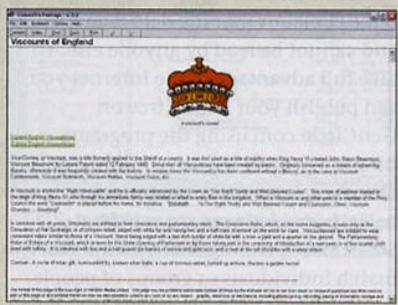
Cracroft's Peerage v3.2

PC PUBLISHER: Heraldic Media Ltd [w] www.heraldicmedia.com [t] 020 8670 3302
 PRICE: £105.75 & P+P

This impressive work comes on a single CD with the data as a Microsoft Help file. There's no menu or standard installation routine – surprising, at this price. Instead you have to open the CD, where you find a self-extracting Zip file which will transfer the data to your chosen directory.

Navigating the database is simple. On first use you have the opportunity of creating a 'word list' to speed up subsequent searching. You can then use the Find button. As well as searching by keyword or text string, Windows Help files also permit using hypertext links to move between sections.

Apart from the Getting Started section, information is ordered into other parts – The British Monarchy, Hereditary Peerages, Life Peerages,



Heraldry and the Peerage, Prime Ministers from 1721, Orders of Chivalry and Merit, Chiefs of Names and Clans in Scotland, Abbreviations, and a large section on 'British Titles'. Some of these, such as Abbreviations, are listings, while others, like Orders of Chivalry, are narrative.

The author has identified the scions of every Duke, Marquess, Earl, Viscount, and Baron in the Kingdom, plus Life

BACKGROUND:
 Lots of information supplements the listings of royalty, life and hereditary peers and other classes of nobility

Peers created under either the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876 or the Life Peerage Act 1958, listing siblings, dates of birth and death and details of marriages and succession. The section on the British Monarchy gives the genealogy of the Royal Family back 1,000 years or so, together with other information about the Royal Household – you can search all of this even from the title page. What's more you can copy any text to paste into your own documents (respecting copyright laws, of course).

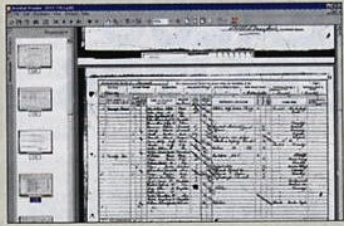
You'll probably buy this CD either for its intrinsic reference value or because you suspect you have a family link to aristocracy. Either way you're well served, but check the web pages before you buy; subscription may be better value.

BUY IT FOR...
 Its well-ordered insight into the British aristocracy

Somerset 1891 Census

PUBLISHER: British Data Archive
[w] www.britishdataarchive.com **[t]** 01722 716 121
PRICE: £44.95

This is the original census information scanned and digitised from microfiche and supplied as PDFs. It covers the whole of Somerset as enumerated along with some street and area indexes. The usual drawback and benefits for images apply: none of the text is searchable or copyable, but there is no transcriber to come between the handwritten page and your interpretation. The seven CDs have individual plastic sheaths or envelopes, all kept in a dinky plastic ring binder. Each CD holds the data for one or more registration districts. There's an area index on each disc, showing the registration and piece numbers for each area, with a hyperlink to open the file. Each file has a bookmark pane to move between folios. There's a master index of area (and streets where the population is more than



NAVIGATION: Bookmarks help you to navigate through each section

40,000). CD One has a guide to reading the census, a population density map, and advice on old handwriting. The last CD has a master area and street index. The usual data is returned, comprising full name, age, sex, occupation and employment status, relationship to the head of the household, parish and county of birth and any disabilities. ■

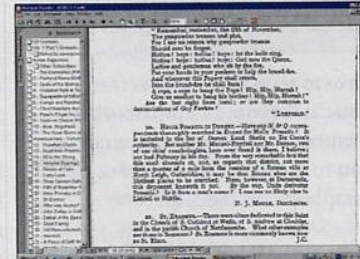
BUY IT FOR...
 A faithful reproduction of the original enumerator's books

Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset Vols 1-6

PUBLISHER: Archive CD Books
[w] www.archivecdbooks.com **[t]** 01594 829 870
PRICE: £55.00

Archive CD Books publishes reproductions of old books, documents and maps on CD, scanned and digitised from originals held by libraries, museums and record offices throughout the country. *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset* was a quarterly periodical with an annual subscription of five shillings. It had two editors, one in each county, who invited readers to send in 'suitable notices relating to the History and Antiquities of the counties'. These could include extracts from local manuscripts in the diocesan, county or parish registers, as well as detailing local dialects, legends and folklore. Each part, organised into volumes of eight parts, could have up to 50 articles, amounting to hundreds of articles in total. This CD holds all volumes from Volume 1, Part 1 in March 1888 to the 6th Volume in its twelfth year.

Topics include transcriptions of parish registers, wills, admons and parish records, descriptions of churches, churchwardens' accounts, anecdotes and stories, family histories, pedigrees, and so on. You can also buy *Notes and Queries for Somerset & Dorset* as separate volumes at £14.25 each. ■



VARIED: Eclectic subject matter characterises Notes and Queries

BUY IT FOR...
 Rare and exceptional content for everyone with Somerset or Dorset ancestors

English Parish Records: Cornwall, Devon, Dorset & Somerset

PUBLISHER: Ancestry.com **[w]** www.ancestry.com/rd/parish
PRICE: £29.95 **SOLE UK SUPPLIER:** TWR Computing
[w] www.twrcomputing.co.uk **[t]** 01284 828 271

The 870,651 records in this database come from parish records – primarily births, baptisms, marriages, and burials – and similar sources such as tombstone inscriptions and obituaries in the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset from the earliest record in 1538 to the latest in 1837 when civil registration began. Being a transcription, everything is beautifully legible, subject to the vagaries of deciphering the originals, and the text is fully searchable on any word. These records are a finding aid to help you to discover your ancestor in time and place. Once identified, the program's publishers refers you to the LDS Church's web pages (www.familysearch.org) where you can, with luck, find the microfilm number of corroborating records in the Church's library (cataloguing is ongoing so there's no guarantee).

As with all Ancestry's parish records, there are caveats. Don't expect all records to cover all dates. Some may have been in Latin; the spelling was self-evidently archaic, and is transcribed as it was written; there are spelling inconsistencies and non-standard grammar. This is a vital aid for researchers into the four counties concerned. ■



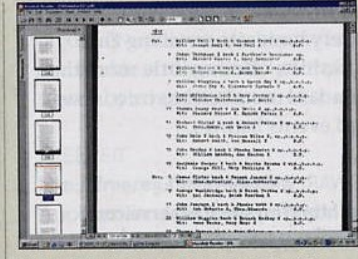
LISTS: Include worthies, unworthies and villains born in Somerset

BUY IT FOR...
 Its close focus on time and place and the extent of its coverage

Oldswinford Miscellany

PUBLISHER: Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry **[w]** www.bmsg.org
PRICE: £6.00

Coming on a single CD, this is a compilation of diverse data for the parish of St Mary, Oldswinford, then in Worcestershire but now in the West Midlands, shown as Old Swinford. The PDF format data spans the years from 1647 to 1819, covering banns, baptisms, marriages, burials, monumental inscriptions, and Poor Law and Settlement records. The CD auto-runs on insertion. The first two pages are credits to the compilers and a list of contents with clickable links. Baptisms, marriages and burials are split into four groups starting at 1647 to 1692 and finishing at 1736 to 1768. There are separate lists of baptisms and burials from 1768 to 1819; and burials only from 1800 to 1813. Marriages are split into 1754 to 1780; and 1780 to 1813: with banns from 1763 to 1771. The section on Poor Law and Settlements covers 1651 to 1794.



NEAT: Transcriptions are simple, efficient and above all, legible

Monumental inscriptions are listed from both the churchyard and interior of St Mary's church, which can hardly have a square yard of surface uncovered. There's also the usual bookmarks and thumbnails pane, which also offers an index of names found in 'sundry documents' relating to the history of Oldswinford and adjacent Stourbridge. ■

BUY IT FOR...
 Easy-to-use listings of old Oldswinford vital records